

VIDEO DISTANCE LEARNING: CONNECTING THE POSSIBILITIES

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Do you remember what an impact the Internet first had and continues to have on education and libraries? Video Distance Learning can make just as big a splash!

Some in education call Video Distance Learning an “electronic field trip”. Those of us in schools know Video Distance Learning is a great partnership between business, cultural organizations, community and education that takes advantage of telecommunications networks. It is a unique technological tool that connects the world to the classroom. Video Distance Learning expands teaching and learning opportunities. Only costs and our imaginations limit the possibilities.

IMAGINE:

- Traveling to the International Space Station with astronauts
- Interacting one-on-one with a research scientist in your favorite field of study
- Joining a musher in the Iditarod
- Sharing local data you have gathered with classes across the country or the world as an opportunity for comparison (would it be a larger, more valid sampling or an opportunity for comparison)
- Joining Titanic discoverer Dr. Robert Ballard as he dives into another adventure through the JASON Project
- Designing a better solution for the I-69 northeast gateway overcrowding
- Racing at the Phoenix Speedway with students from Speedway High School to compare the race track in Phoenix with our own Indianapolis 500 and learn a lot of physics in the process
- Trekking into an isolated area to find out more about both preparing for an arctic expedition and the affect of cold on diabetes
- Observing surgery in a hospital and discussing it with the surgeons
- Teaching Spanish to elementary kids from your high school without having to leave the building

- Celebrating National Chemistry week in an elementary school by taking part in experiments initiated by high school students and their teacher
- Attending a meeting that you just cannot travel to Ft. Wayne or Washington, D.C. that day
- Learning firsthand and interacting with actors, makeup artists, set designers, or lighting specialists at the Indiana Repertory Theatre
- Involving teachers with professional development opportunities

As you can imagine, the opportunities in Video Distance Learning are limitless! These “imagine” ideas are not just ideas; they are Video Distance Learning programs available to anyone on the Vision Athena network in Indiana or through ISDN Gateways. Partnerships with other DL networks expand the connections even further.

Video Distance Learning was once considered an enrichment tool. More and more teachers use Video Distance Learning to develop their own programming that meets state and national educational standards. The teachers note an improvement in their students’ performance and communication skills. Successful Video Distance Learning programs are learner-centered with the use of interactive technologies inherent.

Through both the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC) and the Central Indiana Educational Service Center (CIESC) Vision Athena schools, libraries and community agencies have developed programming, designed presentations, best practices, event checklists, etiquette and interactivity methods and created a fine technical support system. Equipment has been standardized and continues to improve as technology advances.

Most of us educators believe that interactivity is the key to success of most learning, including Video Distance Learning. The technologies available are tools that help us accomplish this goal of reaching into the real world, beyond classroom walls and partnering with the many agencies or other learning environments available. The ultimate goal is to have successful learners. Imagine that!